

**the brightest parts
of us**

crowtesque

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Summary:

Chapter 1 : Beverly

"For a moment she swears she feels the familiar, tacky sensation of blood on her fingers, but Ambriel coos reassurances until Bev stops shaking. *We're okay, we're okay*, Ambriel repeats like a mantra, like a poem she recites when she feels alone. She's already starting to forget how it goes."

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A series of fics focused on the Losers Club and their daemons.

1. beverly

Author's Note:

tw for implied abuse

y'all i love daemon aus and i have so many plans for this series

It's two days after moving in with her Aunt that Ambriel settles. Beverly panics when she sees her, fingers flying across Ambriel's downy chest as she tries to make sure she's not hurt. There's no sign of dust, but that doesn't calm her any. For a moment she swears she feels the familiar, tacky sensation of blood on her fingers, but Ambriel coos reassurances until Bev stops shaking. *We're okay, we're okay*, Ambriel repeats like a mantra, like a poem she recites when she feels alone. She's already starting to forget how it goes.

Beverly wonders if people look at her daemon and *know*. It's a stupid worry that leaves her feeling paranoid, but sometimes men on the street will look twice and she'll suddenly feel like Ambriel is on display - *"Look at me, take advantage of me, I've been hurt and will be hurt again! I'm a bleeding heart for God's sake!"* The moment will pass as it always does with no confrontation, her daemon tucked under the folds of her scarf, and a sick feeling in her stomach. Beverly wonders if she'll always feel this way.

Ten years later and Tom Rogan is one of those men who look twice. He approaches her on the bus the night of New Year's Eve, a gentle smile on his clean shaven face. "I've never seen a bird like that. He looks like he's been shot." Tom's German Shepherd daemon stands at his side, wagging her tail. "She's okay," Beverly assures him automatically, wincing at how stiff her voice sounds. She checks her watch as she takes a drag of her cigarette. Her stop isn't for another ten minutes. "I just worry, that's all," the man continues with sickly sweet honesty. Bev's stomach swoops and Ambriel shudders against her neck. "That's," her voice cracks, "That's kind of you, but we're

okay.”

He talks her into giving him her number before she gets off. It's late, she's tired, she wants to be home in her apartment, but when she lies down for bed all she can think about is *worry*.

Every part of her feels like it's been set alight. Two of her nails are torn, her ribs ache with the promise of a bruise, and she *forgot to put on fucking shoes*. It must be eleven, maybe even twelve, but she's got her phone tucked into her bra and God knows Kay is always there when she needs her. “Bevvie?” A tired but curious voice answers when she picks up. She's the only one who can call her that. “I left him. Tom. I need- I need money, and a train to Bangor.” Beverly listens to the soft chittering of Lux, Kay's red squirrel daemon, while Kay audibly lights a cigarette. “Yeah, love. Jesus and Mary, you're *so brave*. Anything you need.” Bev takes a moment to remind Kay McCall that she is a goddamn miracle of a woman before hanging up. She's feeling a little hysterical laugh bubbling up and she'd rather not wake up the neighbors.

Bev buries her fingers into Ambriel's chest until she can feel their too-fast heartbeats match up and laughs. It feels like it's been forever since they've synced up and felt like the same person. She rubs her thumb delicately across the dark red patch on her daemon's chest and for once doesn't see blood- she rediscovers the spark in her soul. *My heart burns there, too*, Ambriel recites with glee, and the cold air doesn't bother them as they make their escape.

Notes for the Chapter:

bev's daemon ambriel is a female luzon bleeding-heart dove which are just about the coolest birds

2. stan

Summary for the Chapter:

Stan knows what Inbal will settle as before it ever happens. It's one of the things that Stan just *knows*.

Notes for the Chapter:

tw implied suicide, depression, very minor blood

Stan knows what Inbal will settle as before it ever happens. It's one of the things that Stan just *knows*. He knows that Inbal will settle as a blue jay as easily as he trusts that Bill and Danny will always have his back, or how Richie will always manage to get ice-cream all over his face even against his and Eddie's best efforts. He knows it like he knows he has a soulmate out there in the great beyond of *outside Derry*, like he knows every bird in his bird-watching book.

That doesn't mean he doesn't forget, sometimes. He's been near catatonic in his room for four days, trying to process the fact that his family is moving out of town, *that he has to give up his best friends*, when Inbal settles. *It is certain*, they tell Stan, perched in his blond curls. Inbal wasn't as quiet as Stan, but they didn't ever stray from the safety of scripts. Specifically, magic 8-ball responses. "I guess so," he agrees, monotone, but he feels a warm smile creep onto his face as he admires their feathers. Blue into black into white. Stan hesitates. "Will everyone be alright?" He asks aloud, but in his mind he asks *will we be alright?* Inbal tilts their crested head until their beak presses against his nose, and they stare at each other for a little while. *Better not tell you now.*

Life isn't easy, but having Inbal around helps in more ways than one. Getting into NYU had been a moment of pride for him up until he actually moved out there. New York left Stan uneasy, and he'd often catch himself wandering the streets as if he was searching for something before common sense kicked in. The only thing the city

had for him was an accounting degree. When that is attained, he moves again to Atlanta, missing the open sky.

Patty Blum and Asher have lived in Georgia their entire life. She's Stan's soulmate. *Yes - definitely.* They meet at a work party, and her brunette hair is done up in such perfectly symmetrical curls that Inbal nearly sings. Asher is striking as well- a mirror image of Inbal, if only a little more vibrant. They bond over their matching souls, get drinks together. Patty doesn't think he's odd for how he organizes the food on his plate. As Inbal puts it, *all signs point to yes*, so Stan goes ring shopping the next morning and within the year *Patricia Blum is Patty Uris.*

Stan wishes that this downward spiral had started after Mike's phone call, but it might as well have started after leaving New York. An odd sort of loneliness has been plaguing him since. Patty and Asher are lovely, *beyond* supportive, and he can say with confidence that it isn't his marriage he's dissatisfied with... it's everything else. Stan feels like he's walking the line of sensory overload just walking to the book store to pick up the latest *William Denbrough* book. No, it doesn't start with Mike's phone call, but it ends there. Something, or someone, is missing in his life and it's thrown everything off kilter. "I can't do this," he says to the bathroom mirror. He might be able to, if he wasn't so alone, but the memories of his friends are hazy and bland. There's nothing to ground him, not even Inbal, who is starting to violently preen their feathers. Stan finds himself transfixed by the beads of gold dust welling up from his daemon's skin.

"Can we?" He asks, voice monotone but trembling. *Outlook not so good.*

Notes for the Chapter:

stan's daemon inbal is a nonbinary blue jay

3. bill

Summary for the Chapter:

Chapter 3 : Bill

"Funnily enough, it's the dedication page that turns out to be the hardest part. So he doesn't write one."

When Jordan settles, Jordan settles late. Two years too late. Bill is thirteen and sick of the world, sick of Derry, sick of his parents treating him like- like *nothing*, because they don't even acknowledge him anymore unless its to scream about Georgie and Winny. He had been so certain that Georgie's death would be the event to force Jordan to settle. Bill drew speculative pictures of Jordan all through the funeral, settled as a simple mallard duck. Jordan doesn't settle, though, not until all of the losers but Bill and Mike have left, and he certainly doesn't settle as a duck.

"That's crazy, Danny!" Mike cheers Bill and Jordan as they make their way up the Hanlon family's porch. It's clear that Jordan isn't going to be able to fit through the door. Danny tosses his head in acknowledgement, the old wood creaking under his hooves, and Bill smiles crookedly at his friend.

"How'd you know he settled?" Bill hadn't mentioned it when he called beforehand to let Mike know he was coming over- a regular occurrence these days as Bill's parents got more violent. Mike shrugs, Donovan settled around his neck in the form of a fox. "I dunno. He looks like you, I guess?" Bill can't help but guffaw at that and fondly shove Mike's shoulder.

Bill moves out at eighteen when it's made clear there's no space for his soul there, literally and figuratively. His mother's mute swan daemon watches passively as he shoves his things into the Frankensteined trailer he bought off of Mike's dad. They don't say goodbye- Bill figures that they'd parted for good years ago, anyways.

He has everything he needs in the picture of Georgie and Winona on the dashboard and his old type-writer in the back.

College for him is as draining as it is lonely. He doesn't socialize much, dedicating all of his free time into writing. Bill tries writing from experience at first but the more he reminisces on the truly stupid antics he and his friends got up to, the foggier they get. In the end he leans into his dark mood. He skips lectures and Danny grows increasingly irritable, but by the end of Fall semester he has his first novel complete. Funnily enough, it's the dedication page that turns out to be the hardest part. So he doesn't write one. (And every book after that is easy, dedicated to Audra.)

He breaks down the first and only time Audra touches Jordan. They had decided to make a night of it- they were in love, happily married for four years, and God knows they'd seen each other at their worst. Why not bare their souls to each other? Audra passes Chesea to him like she might hand over a particularly fussy baby and it's a solidly 'okay' experience. He doesn't think he's ever touched another person's soul, not even when Winnie was going through her shy phase, so he doesn't have a frame of reference for what it's supposed to feel like. She and Georgie would hide behind Bill whenever anyone new came over to the house. Chesea butts her delicate head against his open palm and Bill half-smiles at the easy affection, gives Audra the go-ahead to stroke a hand down Danny's flank.

They both flinch, hard. Jordan startles backwards and nearly kicks over the dresser before Bill has a hand on his nose to relax him. "It's okay, it's alright," he reassures Audra automatically. She's as pale as a ghost with Chesea all puffed up in her lap. "I'm sorry, I don't know-" but then he *does* know, just for an instant. He remembers that he has touched someone's soul before- multiple someone's. They were old enough to know the significance, clutching at each other's daemons as they stood in a circle, knee-deep in murky water. Bill forgets just as quickly, but when he comes to he's on his knees from the depth of the loss. Neither of them bring it up again, but Bill feels a similar ache when Mike calls.

Notes for the Chapter:

bill's daemon jordan is a male morgan horse
georgie's daemon winona didn't have a chance to
settle, but was a duckling the day they died
audra's daemon chelsea is a female cat

4. eddie

Summary for the Chapter:

"Eddie doesn't think any of them had ever seen Dust before. It's the first time he's seen it, too."

Notes for the Chapter:

tw for myra and sonia

sorry for the break y'all, hopefully will be getting more chapters up soon

Polly is the first of the Loser's Club's daemons to settle. She settles when Eddie is all of nine years old, down in the general hospital with pneumonia. It's three years until he meets Bev, Ben, and Mike, but he loves the small pack of friends he has now-- fiercely. The nurse, Miss Jolie, had used that word earlier when she took his side against his Ma's and let Bill, Stan, and Richie into Eddie's cramped hospital room. The three of them and their daemons had stood huddled around the bed, sharing grim glances as they watched Eddie wheeze and Polly shed fine, gold Dust. Eddie doesn't think any of them had ever seen Dust before. It's the first time he's seen it, too. He's pretty sure he's dying-- *Ma* was sure acting like it, and when the other boys came to visit, Richie hadn't been able to get out one joke.

They left cards when Ma eventually got her way and shooed them out, but Miss Jolie then said that even Ma had to go, and then she'd stayed up with Eddie to read them to him. Eddie doesn't know how long it's been since Miss Jolie turned off the lights and left, but it's dark and dim and when Polly climbs up his side, she nearly scares him half to death. She's bigger than she's ever been before, and when she stretches to nuzzle his face, he's met with long whiskers and a raspy tongue.

The next morning, Eddie can breathe easily despite the large lioness cub draped over his chest. Sunshine is dappled across Polly's spotted coat, making the Dust in her fur sparkle, and it puts him in such a good mood that he only laughs when Ma sees them both and starts

shrieking.

By the fourth time Eddie has “moved out” of his Ma’s house, he and Polly look like they’re on death’s door. Polly has been shedding Dust for days, Eddie’s been having asthma attacks twice a week, and together they’re about as stable as a house of cards, but they’re *free*. Eddie doesn’t know what to do with himself. Polly doesn’t lend him any wisdom-- she doesn’t talk all that much in the first place, and she seems keen to let Eddie handle how the rest of their lives are going to be spent.

It’s a bad call.

He gets a job he hates, an apartment he hates considerably more, and. Well. He gets Myra, along with her little sparrow daemon that reminds him uncomfortably of his Ma’s shrike, Soren. Eddie spends the better part of his days with his fingers gripping Polly’s scruff, wondering when he’ll die of a heart attack or whatever it is that turns up small traces of Dust in Polly’s fur. Whatever it is, he still feels like Polly is handling their situation better than he is. She’s always been the stronger of them. Strong enough that Eddie occasionally wonders if maybe they should’ve been swapped-- With him the daemon, and her the person.

When he leaves Myra, Eddie realizes he’s had everything wrong for a very long time. He left his inhaler in the bedside drawer and for once doesn’t consider going back to grab it “*just in case*.” He realizes in quick succession, too fast for him to even think over, that Polly isn’t sick- she’s scared. He realizes the symptoms of his asthma attacks probably fit the category of panic attacks better. He realizes, for the first time since some nurse showed him a little compassion, that he’s every bit as strong as Polly.

They’re the same, for God’s sake. That’s the first thing you learn about your daemon.

Polly sits in the passenger's seat next to Eddie as he shoves the keys into the ignition with shaking hands and he glances up briefly to meet her eyes. "I'm sorry," He gets out in a rush, before she can dissuade him. "For- For everything." Eddie doesn't know what else he could possibly say to her to get the point across. He'd *smothered her*. *Polly's answering purr drowns out the rest of his thoughts. She keeps up with the rumble of the car the entire drive to Derry.*

Notes for the Chapter:

eddie's daemon polly is an african lioness
sonia's daemon soren is a male shrike
myra's daemon ethan is a male sparrow